

**Preliminary Amendment of U.S. National Stage for International Application  
PCT/EP00/06161 filed July 1, 2000**

invention" and the entire paragraph spanning lines 17 through 20 of page 3, and insert the following new section heading and new paragraphs:

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**--BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

A2 The present invention relates, in general, to biopolymers and crosslinker-free preparations obtained by precipitation and subsequent dewatering of biopolymers, and to a process for their production.

Thus, the present invention includes a crosslinker-free preparation obtainable by adding a precipitant to an aqueous solution and/or homogenized suspension of a biopolymer and then dewatering.--

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At page 5, line 3 thereof, please insert the following new section heading:

**--DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION--**

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A3 At page 27, between lines 1 and 2, please add the following new paragraph:

A4 --What is claimed is:--.

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On a separate, new page 30, please add the following new section heading and paragraph containing an Abstract of the Disclosure:

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**--ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A5 Processes for preparing crosslinker-free, biopolymer-containing compositions, comprising: (a) providing an aqueous mixture of a biopolymer, wherein the aqueous mixture has a viscosity of from 1,000 mPas to 100,000 mPas; (b) combining a precipitant with the aqueous mixture to form a crosslinker-free biopolymer composition; and (c) dewatering the crosslinker-free biopolymer composition to form a crosslinker-free three-dimensional structure; are described. Also described are three-dimensional structures prepared thereby and uses therefor in cosmetics, food additives and medical products.--